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**INDIANA NEWS**

Severe weather season begins in Indiana, how to stay prepared

by: Courtney Spinelli

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INDIANAPOLIS — As severe weather season gets underway and [Severe Weather Preparedness Week](#) is just days away, officials are sharing tips on how to best keep safe.

Over the weekend, much of central Indiana experienced heavy rainfall and high winds, with some areas seeing more significant impacts than others.

Hamilton County Emergency Management

Early Sunday morning, Hamilton County Emergency Management activated the Hamilton County EOC Storm Operations due to a severe thunderstorm watch. Shane Booker, executive director of Hamilton County Emergency Management, said when they receive a storm watch, whether it be a severe thunderstorm or tornado watch, storm operations are activated.

“That includes at least four people and we always have someone that is talking with dispatch, that if a public safety official sees a tornado or funnel cloud, then we’ll activate the outdoor warning sirens for the area,” said Booker. “Then also, we have local amateur radio operators that are trained storm spotters, and if they see a funnel cloud or tornado then we’ll activate the sirens.”

| [Indiana’s first tornado of 2022 is confirmed in Cass County](#) ➤

According to Booker, Hamilton County Emergency Management also has a meteorologist on its staff, looking at weather and radar so that if the National Weather Service issues a tornado warning, they can activate the sirens.

“We also have someone talking with the state amateur radio net that’s also connected directly to the National Weather Service,” said Booker, “So we’ve got a lot of different communication tools that we make sure we maintain those and test them so that when we do have that need to activate storm operations, we’re ready to go.”

On Sunday morning, sirens sounded in parts of Hamilton County, according to emergency management officials.

“We only sound them if there is a funnel cloud or a tornado that’s been cited by a public safety official or a trained weather spotter or if the national weather service issues a tornado

warning,” said Booker. “The National Weather Service saw some rotation on radar and that met their criteria to issue the tornado warning.”

In Hamilton County, officials explained, sirens are activated in specific situations where it meets criteria, in the areas impacted. The sirens are owned by the municipalities, but sounded by the county.

“As soon as we saw that tornado warning in that polygon in the areas that were included in that tornado warning, then we went ahead and activated the sirens in that polygon,” said Booker. “For example, we did not activate the sirens in Sheridan because they were not included in the polygon, but we did activate them for Noblesville and Fishers and others, so it really is dependent on where is that potential threat.”

Hamilton County Emergency Management officials conducted windshield surveys near State Road 32 and County Line Road, looking for possible shingles off of homes or limbs down as well as any additional damage, but did not find any.

“We did see some damage around State Road 47 and U.S. 421. Duke lost some poles in that area, so we did even though that was just outside Boone County we did go over into that area,” said Booker.

He said regardless of where you live, Hoosiers need to be weather aware and prepared in the event of severe weather impacting where you live.

“Severe thunderstorm warnings, I think a lot of times we just take those for granted but those can be just as deadly as a tornado warnings and it’s really important that people still go to that safe place if there’s a severe thunderstorm warning,” said Booker.

| Watch from inside Iowa home as tornado makes direct hit >

Equally as important, Booker said, you need a way to notify you of any emergency alerts aside from your phone or television.

“One of the things that we really promote is making sure that people have a weather radio. That weather radio, most of them have battery backup so that in the event that if you lose

power, that radio is still going to work,” said Booker.

They will also work if you don’t have internet, he reminds Hoosiers.

Make a three-step plan

“It’s really important that folks take three steps. That’s make a plan, build a kit, and stay informed,” said Booker.

After you make a plan, both Booker and IDHS recommend you practice that plan. One of those ways is by conducting household tornado drills at various times during the day so everyone is prepared for all possibilities.

“Move to a safe location and cover the head and neck with your arms. Blankets, pillows and furniture can provide additional protection,” IDHS recommends in the event of a tornado. You are also told to move to a safe location and cover your head and neck with your arms and use blankets, pillows and furniture for additional protection.

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security and National Weather Service (NWS) also recommend Hoosiers [prepare a disaster kit](#) and recommend it contain the following:

- Food and water for three days (include one gallon of water per person, per day)
- Battery-operated all-hazards radio (receives more than 60 types of emergency alerts)
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries for radio and flashlight, if needed
- First aid kit
- Extra clothing, sturdy shoes, rain gear, blankets and personal hygiene items
- List of emergency phone numbers
- Important documents (copies of photo ID, social security card, insurance and banking information)
- Cash (small bills, because power outages can limit ability to use ATMs and credit cards)
- Special items (baby formula, insulin, life-sustaining medication and pet supplies)

Booker said you should also stay informed by connecting with county emergency management pages on social media, like theirs on [Facebook](#) or apps of news sources to keep up-to-date on weather alerts.

Indianapolis Department of Public Works

As central Indiana was slammed with wild weather over the weekend, Indianapolis and Marion County experienced heavy rainfall and some areas that saw flooding into Monday morning.

| [Overnight rain causes flooding issues on roads across central Indiana](#) ➤

Indianapolis Department of Public Works spokesperson, Ben Easley, said the department monitors for several different things during heavy rain events.

“First of all, our waterways monitoring. So, we have different gauges across the county on different waterways so we kind of watch those for high waters, that begins to happen so we kind of get an early activation to watch roads, especially more closely when we see the waterways start to rise,” said Easley.

He said they did see several instances of this throughout the weekend.

“As far as our operations team, especially when we get a lot of water like we did this past weekend, those folks will be out running what we call rain routes. Those are places where historically roads have seen that kind of ponding or low level flooding,” said Easley.

In doing that, the crews make sure the storm grates are clear of any debris so water can drain off of roadways as quick as possible.

“Often times too, in the early spring months, the ground is still really, it’s frozen, it’s very tough so precipitation has a hard time running off and we’re watching for that kind of thing as well,” said Easley.

When asked what Hoosiers can do to help prepare in the event of flooding and staying safe on the roadways, Easley said there are several steps you can take.

“We are obviously very closely connected to the public infrastructure system, so one of our first recommendations is always to have people clean out storm drain inlets where possible especially right before heavy rain is expected or wet weather is expected,” he said.

“We also just advise people, if it’s not a dangerous situation to get down in there and make sure anything leaves or debris or anything is removed from those storm drains so that water can drain just as quickly as possible,” said Easley. “It helps travelers on roadways, but it can also help individual property owners because you don’t want that street inlet flooding and impacting different homes nearby.”

Another reminder Easley said the Indy DPW cannot echo enough is the message to “turn around, don’t drown.”

“We don’t want folks to risk it that may see some water ponding we’d rather people take it easy turn around take a long way around so that they don’t get stuck in a potentially dangerous situation on a flooded roadway,” he said.

Storms that bring extra water also often bring high winds and different instances that may impact drivers like downed limbs or impacted traffic signals at intersections, so Easley said it is good to know the number to call if this happens.

“All of these things can be called into the city to get a crew out to take a look at it,” said Easley.

The number for the [Mayor’s Action Center](#) in Indianapolis is 317-327-4622 and you can call at all hours. Any after hours calls will be routed to DPW dispatch. A reminder anyone with an emergency should always call 911.

In the event of a flooding emergency, IDHS also lent some tips to protect Hoosiers:

- Be aware of any nearby floodplains – flat areas of land near a body of water that is prone to flooding.
- Do not try to drive through water. As little as 2 feet can cause most cars to float, and as little as a few inches of moving water can wash away most cars. Turn around; don’t drown!
- Pump out flooded basements gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid structural damage.

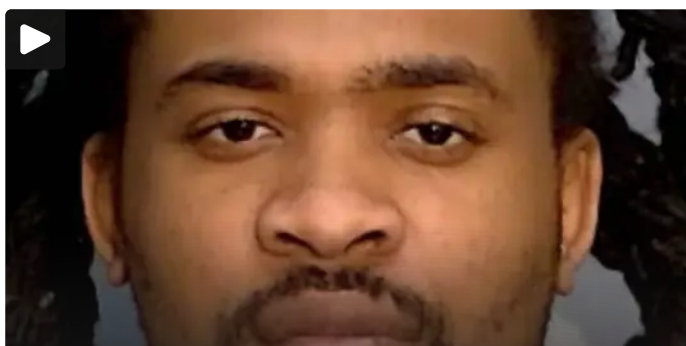
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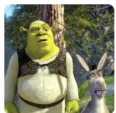
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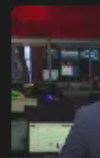
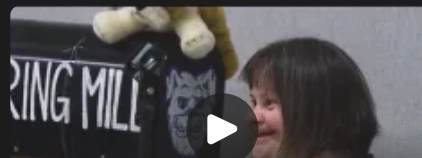
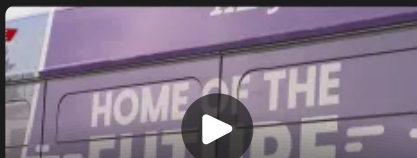
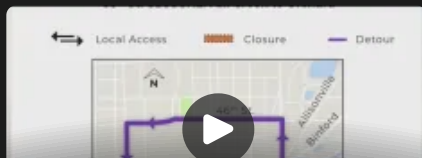
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Map showing a detour route around the State Fairgrounds area. The map includes labels for 46th St., 42nd St., 38th St., College, Fall Creek, Keystone, Allisonville, and Binford. A legend indicates Local Access (double arrow), Closure (orange hatched area), and Detour (purple line). A large play button is overlaid on the map.

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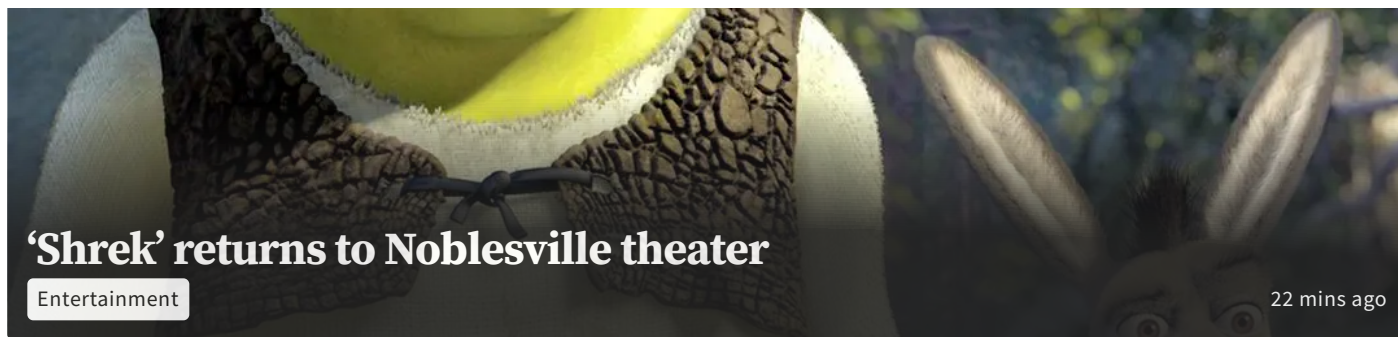


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